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Parkside Student Experiments Selected for Space Flight

Studies of atmospheric radiation and the stability of electronic systems in space proposed by students from Parkside High School, Salisbury, Md., have been selected in a NASA education competition for flight on a suborbital rocket and the Space Shuttle.

The two experiments were the top selections in the NASA Flight Opportunities Competition that was open to high schools in the northeastern United States. The Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md., administered the competition.

The study of atmospheric radiation will fly in the Suborbital Student Experiment Module (Sub-SEM) on a sounding rocket and the electronics experiment in a Space Experiment Module (SEM) on the Space Shuttle.

The experiments were selected based on their scientific objectives, the technical plan and the cross-curriculum involvement in the project.

The atmospheric radiation experiment will consist of flying a Geiger counter with a sensor probe taking measurements outside of the rocket to test if radiation levels increase with altitude.

The electronics experiment will consist of flying several student created circuit boards measuring sine wave parameters such as frequency, period and peak to peak amplitude to see if space flight has an affect on these parameters.

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In addition to having their experiments flown in space, four students and one teacher from each team will spend the week of August 1 – 6 at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Va. At Wallops, the Sub-SEM students will be involved in the final integration of their experiments, the launch readiness review process and participate in the actual launch of their experiments on a single-stage Orion rocket. The SEM students will be involved in the integration of their experiments into the SEM and will view the Sub-SEM launch.

Three other Parkside experiments were selected for flight in the competition – one for flight on Sub-SEM and two on the SEM. Student team representatives also are invited to Wallops to participate in the Flight Opportunities Week activities.

Both groups will receive tours of the Wallops Flight Facility and participate in rocketry and microgravity hands-on activities. On the last day of the week all the students will be involved in conducting presentations to their fellow students and senior managers at Wallops. The Sub-SEM students will present preliminary results from their flight and the SEM students will provide overviews on their experiment proposals.

The flights are sponsored by the Office of Human Resources and Education, the Office of Space Flight and the Office of Space Science, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC.

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